

The Telecom Disputes settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) in the initial stage issued ex-parte mandatory injunction orders to continue those channels on DD Direct+ platform which led to a series of legal battles in the TDSAT, High Court of Delhi and Supreme Court. In all the main petitions, there were also number of interlocutory sub-petitions filed by these companies and the hearings in these courts spread over several days from August to December, 2008. To protect its interest and its revenues, Prasar Bharati engaged best legal experts specialized in different matters like Telecommunication/Statutory jurisdictional matters etc. Two Civil appeals filed by Prasar Bharati in the Supreme Court against the judgments of TDSAT are still pending.

(e) The matter relating to engagement of advocates and payments of high rates to such advocates in some cases without the approval of Prasar Bharati Board forms part of the CVC report which is under examination for further necessary action under the relevant provisions of Prasar Bharati Act.

#### **Recommendations of PCI on paid news**

1305. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Press Council of India (PCI) has recommended amending the Representation of People's Act to make incidents of paid news a punishable malpractice;

(b) if so, whether a Group of Ministers (GoM) would set up to frame the guidelines for the same; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI CHOUDHURY MOHAN JATUA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The recommendations made by the Press Council of India in its 'Report on Paid News' are under consideration of the Government.

#### **Paid news in media**

1306. SHRI RAASHID ALVI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry is aware that paid news have been increasing in media;

(b) if so, what action has been taken; and

(c) whether any legislation is under consideration in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI CHOUDHURY MOHAN JATUA): (a) There have been a number of media reports that sections of the electronic and print media have received monetary considerations for publishing or broadcasting in favour of particular individuals or organizations or corporate entities what is essentially "advertisement" disguised as "news". This has been commonly referred to as "paid news syndrome".

(b) and (c) The Government, in pursuance of the objective of preserving the freedom of press and maintaining and improving the standard of newspapers in India and to inculcate the principles of self regulation among the press, has set up Press Council of India (PCI), an autonomous body under the Press Council Act, 1978. The PCI has deliberated upon the issue and has released its 'Report on Paid News' on 30th July 2010. The major recommendations made in the Report are as below:

- Representation of the People Act, 1951, be amended to make incidence of paid news a punishable electoral malpractice;
- The Press Council of India must be fully empowered to adjudicate the complaints of 'paid news' and give final judgment in the matter;
- Press Council Act be amended to make its recommendations binding and electronic media be brought under its purview; and
- Press Council of India should be reconstituted to include representatives from electronic and other media.

The recommendations of the Report are under consideration of the Government.

#### **Advertisements on channels**

1307. SHRI RAASHID ALVI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the advertisement on different channels are away from truth;

(b) if so, the action taken, so far, in this regard; and

(c) whether any legislation is under consideration in this regard?